563
692 ment, who approves appointment to Sharia and Qadi positions.

5. Structure and Function of the Coptic Church among the Amhara.

795 The importance of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia on the life of every Amhara, of all classes, rural or urban, can hardly be exaggerated. To the Amhara, "Amhara" is synonymous with Abyssinian Christian; and the
[198] liturgical language used in the church, "Geez", with "language of the free". The term used for their religion is "täwahedo", often shortened to "towado", meaning "orthodox".

To the Amhara, his church is so closely connected with his attitudes to his country, his nation, his ethnocentrism, that the severance of ties with the mother Coptic Church of Alexandria, in 1948, passed almost
[779] unnoticed. Only church scholars are aware that, as part of the larger Coptic church, the break with the Western church occurred after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., ostensibly because the Copts insisted on complete fusion of the person of Christ, refusing to accept the "union, but not fusion of Deity and human spirit" of the non-Monophysite faith in the formula he pronounces when
[788] slaughtering a sheep or ox: "In the name of the father,
[224] the son, and the holy ghost, one divinity" The pious hunter will hasten to the wounded gazelle to pronounce the formula before the animal expires, then finish it off by cutting its throat

795 off by cutting its throat.

It may be that the use of the formula became emphatic centuries ago, as an equivalent-though-distinctive counterpart to the Muslim formula "Iin the name of Allah the all-merciful, and Muhammad hid his prophet". Another such distinction is almost certainly the blue neck-cord, "mäṭäb" which both male and female Abyssinian Cäpts wear to distinguish them from Muslims. But their other religious laws and taboos seem to date back to the Old Testament observances of Judaism, notable the taboo on the pig, which is not even raised outside (European Addis Ababa.

795 779 As a consequence of the religiosity of the people, the rules of the church have the force of law, unchallenged especially in the rural areas. Even the more modernized administration and new legislation has made little change in the close inter-relation of church and state functions, at the grassroots level. This interrelation is even closer in the form of social pressure. Foreign observers have remarked that without this church organization the social structure of the country would fall to pieces and lose its coherence.

795 Another significant factor is the large number of persons consecrated, or partly consecrated to the church service. Besides priests, monks and nuns there are boy deacons and church students, chorister-scribes, and other semi-laymen attached to the church, whose total number has been estimated at from 10% to 20% of the population, particularly the male population.

b) Parish Organization.

423
795 In many districts of the oldAmhara provinces, the church has owned much feudal land (it was given 1/3 of the land in the 13th century). Endowments from the wills of pious persons have been adding to this.

This land, which is regarded as "rest", freehold real estate, in the traditional land tenure, is administered in divisions, called "dəbber", that somewhat resemble medieaval European parishes. The population of such an area, which directly or indirectly supports the local church, through tithes, rents, services, periodic supplies, memorial gifts, etc., refers to "and dəbber agär" (lit. one particular countryside) as its home district; much as an Italian refers to "mi paese".

793 The priests attached to this church (often for long periods) usually attempt to create a residential kinship unit for themselves, similar to the residential hamlets of freehold families, inviting their nephews and other young-married kin, both patrilineal and matrilineal, to settle near the church. A priest thus closely surrounded by kin becomes the local patriarch, and his personal economic future, as well as his leadership are assured. The priest locally appointed by higher church authorities ato act as administrator is the sacristan, "gäbäz", or "qəs"(priest) gobäz", who is respectfully addressed and referred to as "aläqa" (lit. chief).

793
795 The number of clergy attached to an old-established, local church, often includes, besides the "gobäz"

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 795 priest, seven other priests of varying seniority, 12 deacons, a head deacon, a chamberlain, at least a dozen "dabtära" chorister-scribes, several aged monks, and elderly widows who have taken vows as nuns. The latter do much of the baking and beer-brewing for the local church. But if a poor church, "gäṭär" is founded by and dependant on a landholding kin group not on church land, it may have merely two priests and 3 deacons, so that on its special saint's day dabtara have to be invited from other churches, to perform the proper chants, dances, and chorus of chanting.

c) Personnel of the Church Institution, and Church Education.

793 The ordinary parish priest, "qēs" does not need to be verylearned or even very ascetic, but he is expected to live a holy life in accordance with all the rules of the church, observe even minor fasts, and to be married in the eucharistic, "qurbān" marriage. He is identified by the headcovering which he wears even in church, consisting of thin muslin wrapped around a cylindrical white cap. If his wife dies, he cannot marry again, and in order to continue functioning as a priest, he is expected to take monastic vows, putting on the "qob"(white cap) of the monk, without muslin turban.

One of the duties of the priest is to perform the eucharist on Sunday for persons considered living a Christian life, i.e. married in church (a minority).He

533 same name. "Saatat", the midnight chant, has a special
796 mode. "Dawit", the Psalms of David, are chanted in their characteristic mode, as is the "Addis Kidan" (New Testament).

On other occasions, not only does the musical composer have the opportunity to improvise, but the lyrical poetry, "qene", can be varied. In rural districts, priests who can only recite Geez but not compose in it, because they don't understand it, even compose "qene" in Amharic. For example:

[559] "How are you, earth? How are you, world?
Even though I love you (my home soil), I wish not to come.
Even if I hated you--how shall I stay away?"

This poem, chanted as part of a church service, is not strictly liturgical, varies from district to district, and can express a wide variety of philosophical emotions, including the Weltschmerz motive illustrated here. The peasants appreciate this unofficial, Amharic addition to Geez liturgy, and often mutter under their breath "Aiyye! what good words!".

(f) Heretical Movements.

795 Like any old church, the Abyssinian Coptic church has had heretical movements within it, but none of them have ever been able to split the church into sharply divided sects. Instead, heretical sects seem to follow

715 the usual Amhara (and Tigre) pattern of regional divergence.

Thus, in the Amhara province of Godjam, where separatist regionalism is strong, there survives traces of an heretical movement from centuries ago when waves of theological debates followed the split of the Monophysites, and whenever contact with European Christians awakened the old debates. Now dormant, though not forgotten, and still quietly followed by some is the movement referred to as "tsega", or, "tsēga lej". Their enemies in the leadership of the Abyssinian "towado" (orthodox) church say that this movement dates to the influence of the Portuguese Jesuits in the 17th century. It is passed on in some regional church schools. To counteract this and brand it as heretical, the orthodox church requires every priest to take an oath, before ordination, that he does not hold with this or any other heretical sect.

In the Amhara province of Behemdir (Gondar) there survive traces of a sectarian movement which is regarded as diametrically opposed in dogma to the aforementioned, leaving the orthodox view somewhere in the middle. This movement was the "qebat". It held the most absolute of the Coptic doctrine of Monophysitism, emphasized the person of Jesus, and deplored the widespread worship of saints. It is somewhat more respectable in the orthodox church than the other sect, but appeal to saints is too popular to give this sectarian view much future.

788 the chest. The church is then "saluted" by kissing the wall, a ceremony called "sälam" in Geez. If the person wears sandals, he must remove them before entering the church itself.

[211] On the path near the church, or leading to it, there is often a conical pile of small rocks. This may indicate a church on a nearby hilltop, and this pile, "mäsalämiya", functions then as a poster of salutation. If the passerby is in a hurry on another errand, he may simply bow deeply in the direction of the church instead of going there to kiss the wall. In modern times truck-drivers will bow in that direction without stopping.

794 The individual layman usually belongs to a private sodality that holds private communion together. But he may, more informally, invite some personal friends on his personal Saint's day, especially his namesake's. Since this informal private communion is cheaper, costing only the price of a jar of beer and some roasted grain, it is more popular among the poor than the formal "mähabber" sodality. The informal private communion, called "zekert", is shared only by men, uses no drummer, no expensive wheat bread, no collection for a common purse, and usually only the personal confessor is invited from among the priesthood. But the zekert cannot be used as a means of gaining social prestige.

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795 e) Religious Syncretism.

Surrounded by Muslim and "pagan" religions, and

795 led by a comparatively tolerant and rarely learned clergy, even loyal and observant Abyssinian Christians frequently follow practices of other religions without being ostracized or even criticized.

755 In the middle of the preparations for "Mäsqäl", the Feast of the Cross, emotionally ill or despondent patients believed to be possessed by an "evil" Zar or "Buda" spirit, are taken by their relatives into the incipient sunshine and deposited at a spot where trails form a crossroad. A doctor of the "Zar" religious cult (see later description) performs incantations, using incense to lure the Zar. Then a chicken is slaughtered, with the Christian formula pronounced over it. This cure is believed to be particularly effective if the Zar spirit is a Coptic Christian himself, who will then feed on the properly slaughtered chicken and leave the patient alone.

796 795 On Fassika, the Coptic Easter, Ethiopian Muslims living in Coptic provinces have an equivalent feast, in which many Coptic Christian women andd small children passively participate only a few hours after they have returned home from all-night prayers at the church. Even more curious is the fact that this particular Ethiopian-Muslim holy day celebrated near Gonder the day of a Muslim saint called "Sheykh Abäder", is celebrated according to the Coptic, not the Muslim, calendar. (There is a parallel to such calendar syncretism in Egypt, where the founder of a dervish order, Ahmed il-Badawi, is celebrated at his tomb according to the Coptic calendar.[78]

78. Littmann, E.: Ahmed il-Badawi, ein Lied auf den ägyptischen Nationalheiligen. Akad. Wiss. u. Lit., Mainz, 1950, No. 3.

796
795 On Easter, the Muslim worshippers of Saint Sheykh Abader leave Gondar town beginning at dawn, for a hill about half an hour's walking distance to the east, bringing with them about 100 live sheep, each donated by a faily. This is the hour when the Christians still feast on meat and beer. The hill is far enough away so that the rival religions do not annoy each other, but in the belief of the worshippers, the miracle of a water spring [317] will recur on this particular hill on this saint's day, despite the seasonal dryness which is then at its height making water a valuable and much desired commodity.

The Muslim men seat themselves on one side of the hill, the Muslim women, their hair covered with colorful red kerchiefs, on the other. Some erect shelters against the mounting sun. The men proceed to slaughter the sheep, away from the groups, with the formula "Iin the name of Allah the all-merciful and Muhammad his prophet". The meat is well roasted, then passed around in baskets, the pieces already cut to individual portions. There is plenty for everyone. There is also wheat bread ("qitta").

The Muslim leader meanwhile has proceeded half way up the hill, at a spot midway between the men and the women, and has begun to dig a hole about three feet deep. The water table is sufficiently high here so that muddy water begins to accumulate in the hole gradually. He digs another few inches, and more water accumulate. A half-gourd, sliced lengthwise, is brought and he reaches into the hole and begins to pass up the water. When the silt has settled in the bottom of the gourd, it is

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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held high, and everyone acclaims the miracle. Everyone tries to obtainssome of the water to drink; the bottom of the hole keeps filling up for some time. Later, mud from the hole is passed around on green leaves, [751] and many, especially women, smear it on their foreheads, against sickness, demons, and barrenness which afflicts many of the townswomen. Some older Muslims recite prayers. The mood is generally gay, and the women banter happily from an hour after sunrise to high noon, when the feast is over, Then all begin to return to Gondar town, after pledging gifts for the next celebration of the saint's day, provided he has fulfilled their prayers.

Meanwhile, Copts, mostly women, including many barren ones, have joined the Muslim women on the hill. No special notice is taken of them; they are tolerated, and not insulted as they would be on other occasions. The Copts bring their own live sheep and the few Coptic men present slaughter them apart from the Muslims, so that their formula "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, One Divinity", is not heard. The Christian women and children also smear some of the saint's mud on their foreheads, and also vow donations to the next Sheykh Abader feast if their prayers are fulfilled. [783] They bear the tell-tale marks until they reach their own homes in Gondar, and are not punished for what otherwise might at least require re-baptism. Like Muslims, they even bring mud, rocks, and water from the saint's hill to their ill kinfolk. Coptic men do not flaunt their participation so freely. The Coptic priests, who of

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

776 795 course know what is going on, ignore the whole matter, just as they ignore the Zar worship.

795 788 Parallels to such religious syncretism are found not only in Egypt, but also in Syria, where Christian women go on short-range pilgrimage to the tomb of "weli" saints and smear mud from holy springs on their faces on a certain day of the Christian religious calendar.[79] This takes place in rural areas of Homs, but even near Damascus Muslims take part in celebrating the day of the Feast of the Cross in September.[80] Just as in visits to the tomb of water saints in Muslim Algeria,[81] the pilgrimage to Sheykh Abader is believed to bring on the light rains, which usually begin about that time, making early plowing and a good harvest possible. This is equally desired by both Muslims and Copts, just as individual good health is desired by both. Perhaps this unexpressed recognition explains the paradox of this religious syncretism.

f) The Church and the Present National State.

TA 659 Three phases can be distinguished in the recent relations of the Abyssinian church and the Amharic "Solomonic Dynasty" which the church returned to power in the 13th century but which now attempts to modernize

79. Gaulmier, J.: Pélérinages Populaires à Hama. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, 1931, Vol.1, pp.137-152.
80. Tresse, R.: Usages Saisonnières. Revue d'Etudes Orientales 1937, pp. 1-4; Lecerf & Tresse: Les Arada de Damas. BEO, 7-8, pp.236-264.
81. Probst-Biraben, J.H.: Pour La Pluie de Printemps en Algerie. An Terre d'Islam, 22,1942, pp. 264-272.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

756 will trace the thief or the stolen goods. Also, the active intercession for a better future, which the dabtara can achieve to some extent by appealing to saints and angels whose secret names he knows from his books in Geez, is considered far superior to the mere fortune-telling of the täṇqway.

D. The Scribe (dabtära) as Healer

795 a. Summing up the position of the dabtära

756 In many ways the social position and activities of the dabtara symbolize the syncretic character of Amhara culture. His official function is that of semi-lay staff of the Coptic Abyssinian church. He serves as scribe, chorister, translator from Geez to Amharic; the church could not do without him. His official rewards are meager, mostly a parceling out of what the priests receive. Thus his major income comes from his unofficial, extracurricular activities as healer. The copyist of church works logically becomes the writer of amulets. This brings him in touch with the cosmology of supernatural spirits, some of which are considered in the realm of zar, buda, ganyän and with doctors ranging from the empiricist woggesha to the exorciser-sorcerer täṇqway. It may seem surprising that there is not more competition between these specialist. The fact is that the dabtära, enjoying the greatest respectability among healers because of his association with the church, can afford to be and is generous to all except the täṇqway, and in fact enjoys his position as uncrowned king of healers. He is the only healer, apart from the empiricist-surgeon "woggesha", to whose house men clients and patients walk publicly in broad daylight without fearing loss of prestige.

795 His social status compares to that of a "great man" (telleq säw),
756 but much of this is due to the fear in which he is held, because of his power over the supernatural world, in Amhara belief. There is fear that if someone were to offend him, he might use his powers to do evil - though black magic is not his usual metier. (The "love magic" of the däbtära has been described in relation to sex).

[539] "of insects, the worst is the scorpion;
of men, the worst is the däbtära".

[574] For the dabtara are unabashed in inviting themselves to feasts, weddings and any distribution of goods (e.g. parceling out of meat as soon as an ox has been slaughtered). In fact, they often act as if the host owed them an apology for not having sent an official invitation. Therefore, dabtara are usually invited to family feasts even if they are not kin.

795 The däbtära learns his craft through apprenticeship, beginning
756 when in the upper grades of church school. To achieve this, he
874 must be "attentam" (of unmixed Amhara or Tigre stock), have a good chanting voice and musical ear, be good in school, and find a däbtära-teacher willing to impart his knowledge to him. At this stage in church school he begins to be permitted to learn to write; and is not punished for doodling - forbidden at lower grades for fear a student might fumble on a formula and misuse a powerful spell.

795 There is even one priestly function which the däbtära occasionally
756 carries out. That is "re-baptism". He may re-baptize a patient vic-
[183] timized by ganyän, sometimes also cases of buda, as part of exorcism.

795 Some dabtära have grown wealthy through mass-production of
756 amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be
552 filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

789 The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine), rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually [384] made of soot, charcoat, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A fre- [716] quent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susneos, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female [567] of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

773 A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child
789 had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay themurderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

136 is no fish there except very little from the rivers; from the There sea none.

795 792 There are no monasteries except of St. Anthony, and not of any other order, as some friars say who come from there.

291 The gentlemen, monks, canons, and priests are clothed; most of the other people are bare from the waist upwards, and a sheepskin on the shoulders, with the front and hind feet tied together.

792 346 [262] Most of the monasteries are situated on high mountains, or in great ravines; they have large revenues and jurisdiction. In many monasteries they do not eat meat all the year, and fish very few times, as they have not go it in the country. The services of these monasteries are psalms and prose, and so it is done in the churches of the canons.

796 Every church has two curtains, one on this side of the altar with little bells, and no one but priests enter inside this curtain; and another curtain in the middle of the church. And no one but persons in orders enter the church, and many gentlemen and honourable persons are ordained in order to enter the church. They go to the door of all the churches and monasteries to read the epistles and gospels, and they say them rapidly, and there they give the communion to the people.

The priests consecrate at the altar, and do not show the sacrament. When the priest who says mass comes to take the communion, he takes a particle from the top, and the other two large parts he leaves for the communion of the people. All the people who come to the church have to receive the communion every day, or else not come to church. When the communion is ended, they give them a little blessed water with which they wash their mouths.

Nobody sits down in the church, nor do they enter it shod; they do not hem or spit, nor do they let any dog or other animal come into the church. They confess standing,

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by
784 one of themselves, nor will Moslems eat any which has
795 been killed by a Christian. We had one Moslem with us when we were on trek, and as he would not eat the ox which my other men had killed he bought a whole sheep for himself, and killed and ate it himself; none of the other men would touch an atom of it, even when their own supply ran out and they had no meat at all.

262 Of course the comparatively high price of meat (for
262 an Abyssinian) prevents the too frequent consumption of *broundo* amongst the people, and their tastes in everyday food are simple. Bread is their mainstay. This is found in many varieties; some of it soft, slightly sour in taste, and pale brown in colour; the most popular is of flour made from *teff* or millet seed, mixed to a thick paste with water and then poured into a large rough slightly concave iron receptacle and cooked over an open fire, without grease or fat of any kind. When finished this bread takes the form and aspect of large pancakes, twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, and is very good, especially when eaten with jam or butter; we always ate it ourselves when on trek. The native eats with it a kind of mash of lentils or dried peas, ground and cooked, and mixed with butter and a very hot red sauce which is produced from the chilli; this latter is very widely cultivated in several varieties all over the country.

263 The amount of pepper that is put into their cooked dishes is as a rule disastrous to the European palate at the first time of trying, and how they can swallow the fiery compounds that they do passes my comprehension —their tongues and palates must be made of leather.

264 All food, including meat, is eaten with the fingers amongst all classes, a piece of bread being broken off,

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935.
MP5 Amhara MP5

793 They have always been bitterly opposed to pro-
176 gress and to innovations, more so as regards changes in their own Church than as regards the introduction into the land of alien religions, strange to say. Thus for example a learned individual, a very religious layman whom I knew, had been accused by the priests of expounding the Gospels in a manner somewhat different to that generally accepted, and as a result he was imprisoned for three years. His views on the subject of his own Church were instructive!

793 On the other hand they are by no means so in-
609 tolerant to other religious beliefs and efforts in the country; they are not fanatical, and if left alone and not interfered with are not markedly anti-foreign. Individually I have always found them quite pleasant and friendly, and I am bound to say that Mr Wylde, who met a great many of them in various parts of the country, seemed vastly to prefer them to European missionaries. But as a body I think they are—to put it mildly—an unfortunate institution, and so far as their possessions are concerned, treatment on the lines adopted by our Henry VIII would seem to be overdue.

609 Moslems, Jews, and others practise their religion
795 in peace. I have seen religious processions of the followers of Islam on their feast days pass through the streets shouting and singing completely free from molestation, and on the occasion of my last visit I saw a mosque which was on the verge of completion being constructed in one of the principal streets of Addis Ababa.

It is rather remarkable that in spite of the bitter religious warfare in which they have been engaged for centuries Abyssinians should be so tolerant of their

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

ng enemies and should allow them to profess faith openly as they do, when one considers the ha[illegible]rought by Moslem invasions and Galla inroads.

Even the Falasha Jewish ironworkers in the north, who are doubly regarded with dislike and suspicion as being Jews and as being possessed of supernatural powers, are treated with tolerance, though avoided.

No doubt this happy result is contributed to so far as Moslems are concerned by the fact that in Abyssinia they do not appear to be strict or fanatical—in pleasing contrast to their behaviour elsewhere. Mr Wyman Bury tells a delightful story in exemplification of this latter frame of mind. A pilgrim to Mecca, a plump and prosperous Moslem merchant at Aden in ordinary life, was gazing from the deck of the ship in rapt enthusiasm at Jeddah, which against the sun-scorched country beyond looked like a stale bridecake on a dust-heap. "Oh, the sacred land," he crooned "the blessed land, where pigs and Christians cannot live."

The Abyssinians still have a church in Rome, a monastery in Jerusalem, and monasteries and Ethiopic texts were discovered in the Libyan desert by the German explorer Falls.

The Abyssinian Church endeavours to maintain friendly relations with the other Christian communities: interesting examples of this are the missions sent to the Pope by the Emperor Menelik in 1906 and by the late Empress in 1921. A mission was also in Jerusalem at the close of 1922 in connection with some ancient rights of the Abyssinian Church regarding the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other holy places; under the Turkish régime these rights had been transferred to the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segregated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter.

Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat*, or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which contrast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen*, meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mädäriyä*, land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rist*.

The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[48]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[49] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

TABLE 2

[P. 114]

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ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF ETHIOPIAN SECONDARY AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ethnic Group	Percentage	Religious Group	Percentage
Amhara	55	"Orthodox"	67
Tigre	22	"Protestant"	6
Galla	15	"Catholic"	5
Gurage	4	"Christian"	15
Others*	4		
		Total Christian	93
		Muslim	4
		Others†	3

* Adari, Somali, Danakil, Wollamo, Kambata, Mecca, etc.

† Baha'i; agnostic; "no religion"; etc.

COMMENTS:

E A [125] [128]

1. The ethnic figures must be regarded with some caution, since as many as 17 per cent of the 700 respondents failed to answer the question. It is difficult to know whether this is due primarily to the reluctance of non-Amhara students so to identify themselves, even anonymously; to the general sensitivity about mentioning anything directly related to the "tribal question"; or simply to misunderstanding of the question. I suspect that the first-named factor may not be the most important. At any rate, if one compares the secondary school replies, in which 20 per cent failed to indicate their ethnic identification, with the college replies, in which only 10 per cent failed to do so, the greater percentage of response among the latter is accompanied by a slight *increase* (53.3 to 56.7 per cent) in the Amhara category.

   The figures on religious affiliation are more reliable, since only 3 per cent of the entire sample failed to answer that question.

2. Fifteen per cent of the students who indicated their ethnic affiliations are the offspring of mixed marriages, nearly two-thirds of which were between Amhara and Galla. These students were entered in the above classification according to the ethnic group of the father.

3. The students were also asked to indicate whether their own religion differed from that of their parents. *Ten per cent indicated such a change.* Of these, 28 per cent became agnostic or indicated "no religion"; 25 per cent converted to Protestantism; 17 per cent to Catholicism; 18 per cent went from "Orthodox" to "Christian" (which probably means to Protestantism in most cases); and 7 per cent changed to Baha'i.

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4. *A comparison with the ethnic and religious composition of the country* as a whole naturally suggests itself. Unfortunately, national figures have not yet been calculated to any comparable degree of reliability. If one refers to the crude estimates in common currency, certain disproportions are readily apparent.

   Thus, the Amhara proportion of the national population has been estimated at 25 to 30 per cent. It is clear that they are disproportionately represented in the school system; but not so greatly as has been at times alleged. In view of the statistics and considerations presented above, it would seem that 50 per cent is the upper limit of enrolment by "pure Amhara" in the post-elementary schools.

   The disproportions with regard to religious affiliation speak for themselves. The most recent published estimates are: Ethiopian Orthodox, 35 per cent; Muslim, 35 per cent; pagan, 25 per cent; other, 5 per cent. (Lipsky, *Ethiopia* [New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962], p. 101.)

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

So the orientation of the modern adolescents is a complex one, demanding detailed analysis. In this section we shall discuss data that give some indication of their attitudes regarding religion, science, taste, morality, and politics.

Religion.—With regard to a general commitment to religion Ethiopian students today remain in good part tradition-directed. They mention "religion" more frequently than any other matter except success in school as the question on which they are most in accord with their parents. Religious themes are mentioned more frequently than any other in response to the question, "As a parent, what specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

Table 8 describes the incidence of student adherence to some of the traditional religious practices in Ethiopia. As might be expected, there is a consistent decrease in conventional religiosity as one moves from the secondary to the college level. Perhaps more significant is the extent to which the modern adolescents do remain faithful to the old religious practices, in view of their considerable alienation from the institution of the Ethiopian Church.[21]

Despite its toleration of a few reforms instigated by Haile Selassie, such as permitting women to sit alongside men in some of the Addis Ababa churches and providing occasional sermons in the vernacular Amharic, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has not yet begun to adjust to the demands of the modern era. It remains rooted in the experience of an isolated peasant civilization, fixed on the past rather than turned toward the present and future. Thus it has neglected the substantial religious needs of the modern adolescents, who are eager for a fresh treatment of the great matters which religion has traditionally interpreted. But when youth today look for spiritual guidance, they find archaic liturgy; and when they look for spiritual inspiration and social teachings, they are told only to fast and observe the other hallowed customs.

It is this state of things, as well as the natural secularization of life in the cities, that has turned a number of students away from religion altogether. Many more, however, have sought to retain some sort of religious life by making new kinds of adjustment themselves. One alternative has been a privatization of faith, making religion a primarily personal matter no longer dependent on the institution of the church. Another alternative has been to adopt one of the Western forms of Christianity through contact with one of the various missions in Ethiopia.* In recent years a third alternative has fired

* In this they have been attracted more by Protestantism than by Catholicism, and for two reasons. The biblical purism and evangelical fervor of the Protestant missions seem best suited to meet their needs for total commitment and reorientation. Catholicism, moreover, is represented to them chiefly by the Jesuit order, whose members have managed two important schools in Ethiopia and many have earned a bad name among students because of their political style.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the imagination of some other students: attempting to reform the Orthodox Church from within. This has been done within the framework of the Orthodox Students Association, which will be discussed further in chapter vii.

Science.—Of all the aspects of Western culture to which they have been exposed, Ethiopia's students have been most receptive to the teachings of natural science. They tend to regard it as the most important single benefit which Ethiopia can gain from Western civilization. After religion, morals, and manners, "science" is the response students give most often to the question: "What specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

TABLE 8

EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENTS OBSERVE TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Practice	Secondary School (per cent)	College (per cent)
Follow the fasts:		
All the time	38	16
Most of the time	26	23
Sometimes	27	24
Not at all	9	37
Go to church (mosque):		
More than once a week	9	2
Once a week	50	40
Less than once a week	25	36
Not at all	7	22
Bow to church (mosque):		
Always	28	9
Some/most of the time	50	38
Not at all	22	53
Pray:		
Twice or more daily	64	40
Once a day	22	23
Once or twice a week	6	14
Once or twice a month	5	10
Not at all	3	13
Number	(485)	(195)

Disagreement on such questions as the nature of solar eclipses, the descent of man, and the etiology of disease is common between the modern adolescents and their own parents. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the scientific imagination has yet displaced traditional thought patterns in the minds of Ethiopian students, or that scientific beliefs have fully replaced

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

5

THE OLD AND NEW ELITES

The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that characterizes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels: coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The governmental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Orthodox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratification.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amdä Ṣeyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum.

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[81] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas.

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, like the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest.

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

directed peasantry, and suffer the consequences, no dynamic program of agricultural and social development can take place in Abyssinian areas that does not enlist the active cooperation of the local *bälābbät* and *shum*.*

The Decline of the Clergy

Although the church was instrumental in bringing Rās Tafari to power—by relieving the nobles of their oath of allegiance to Līj Iyāsu—it was as a whole not sympathetic to his policy once he began to rule. Foremost champions of tradition, the clergy viewed with suspicion Rās Tafari's interest in modern education and other reforms. So pronounced was their conservatism that his weekly *Berhānennā Salām* found it newsworthy to report the fact that the clergy of one important provincial church were actually reading the Addis Ababa newspaper each week.[37] He was wise to act gingerly at first, limiting ecclesiastical reform to such matters as publishing religious texts in Ge'ez and Amharic, and encouraging the work of foreign missionaries.

In the past three decades, however, changes of many sorts have had the effect of reducing the degree of independent authority which the clergy traditionally enjoyed. These changes included the achievement of independence from the Alexandrian Patriarchate; the weakening of the church under the Italian occupation; subjection of church administration to the central government; and competition from the secular government schools.

Rās Tafari initiated the policy of seeking independence from Alexandria in 1929, when he secured the investiture of five Ethiopian bishops. This gave indigenous clergy, for the first time, the right to ordain priests and deacons, although they remained subordinate to the Egyptian archbishop. In 1950 an Ethiopian bishop, the *eçhagē*, was consecrated as archbishop; and in 1958, culminating Haile Selassie's patient and skillful negotiations, complete autonomy from Alexandria was achieved.

The attainment of ecclesiastical independence has heightened the prestige of national church officials in Ethiopia. It has brought about a re-organization of the national church hierarchy, in which fifteen bishops now hold office, one for each of the fourteen provinces, and one in Jerusalem. At the same time it has reduced the effective freedom of the clergy as a separate status group. Deprived of the external source of legitimacy which the Egyptian *abuna* formerly provided, the clergy are now entirely subordinated to the power of the Emperor. This condition was formally articulated in the Constitution of 1955, which made the election and appointment of archbishops and bishops

* A potentially significant medium of communication between them and the central government is the Chamber of Deputies, which since 1957 has brought popularly elected notables from the provinces to Addis Ababa.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

"subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

The general position of the church had already been weakened by the events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever government schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full-time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite

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* A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Ye-dam Demṭs*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkātchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makuānnent*, Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

proverb which stresses the rights of women in this regard gives the following advice:

Balägar siṭagäb yemaṭäl bə-degger;
Tayəwennä nay qiṭäwen yegägger.

When a peasant gets sated he beats you with wood;
Leave and come home, let him bake his own bread!

A couple who have firmly decided upon divorce need simply call in their relatives or go before the *çhïqā shum* in order to have their property properly divided. The only recourse to judicial process is when, as often happens, disputes break out concerning the division of property. In the *damoz* form of marriage, in which there is no civil oath, divorce is yet simpler. The wife is given certain presents and a monthly salary for the duration of the marriage. When the husband has to leave for another part of the country, or if the couple quarrel, they simply separate without further ado.

Despite its heavy claim on the energies of its members, then, the Amhara kinship system is such as to make members of the nuclear family relatively independent of extended relationships, and to give the individual marriage partners important areas of independence from each other.

Religious Organization

Membership in the Monophysite Church is automatic for all Amhara except a small percentage who are Muslim. This membership is symbolized by the ceremony of baptism, performed for male infants on the fortieth day and for females on the eightieth. At that time the child receives a special Christian name in addition to his regular family name.

Certain obligations are incumbent upon every member of the church. Foremost among these is the requirement of fasting, which begins for children of both sexes at about the age of seven and introduces a considerable element of constraint into the lives of the Amhara. Second, there is the obligation to observe the Sabbaths and the main holidays by refraining from arduous physical labor on those days. In addition, each household is obliged to contribute a certain quantity of grain to the local church every year.*

Apart from the rigorous fasting requirements, and the injunction not to work on holy days—a dubious hardship—the individual is relatively free of ritual obligations. The rituals demanded by the church are so manifold, and so sacred, that responsibility for them is given to the clergy, and the laymen

* In some areas this is a fixed amount per household (*e.g.*, one or two *quana*); in others it is proportionate to the wealth of the family. It is collected by a lay official of the church, the *gəbaz*, though sometimes by the *gabaz*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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are left free to a large extent. Since every day of the month except the thirtieth is sanctified by dedication to some saint, Mass must be performed virtually every day, a norm which is actually fulfilled by churches which have a numerous clergy. The burden for individual clergymen is kept small by a system of rotation. The average parish church will have services perhaps ten to fifteen times a month, which is still too often for heavy popular attendance. Even on Sundays and the most important holidays, when the laity are expected to attend, their participation is excused by other considerations. Those who have eaten earlier in the day, who have had sexual relations the night before, or who are harboring a grudge in their "stomach" are not even supposed to come to church. If they do come, they sit outside the wall chatting with one another while the Mass is performed inside.

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Customs concerning Communion and Confession likewise give the individual a wide range of freedom. Partaking of the Communion is not required of anyone; the experience simply is available to those who are ritually pure (children, and those who have married by the *querbān*), if they are so inclined. Confession is not mandatory, but according to personal inclination. Every man has the right to choose his own personal confessor or "soul-father," though if satisfied with the one of his father, he may retain him. (A woman adopts the confessor of her husband.) The soul-father's advice may be sought when a problem arises. If a man sins—breaks the fast, works on a holiday, commits theft or murder—he is supposed to confess. If he chooses to do so, the soul-father will prescribe a certain penance—fasting an extra amount, sleeping on the floor for a period, giving something to the poor or to the church. But the initiative is entirely up to the sinner and probably more often than not he keeps the offense to himself. The proportion of Amhara who keep every fast strictly, go to church a few times a month, and confess their transgressions to the soul-father is small; in the estimate of one Amhara informant, less than five per cent.

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Still greater permissiveness may be observed in connection with the religious fraternal associations known as the *māhebar*. The *māhebar* consists of a group of people from the same general area, usually of the same sex, who meet once a month on the day devoted to the saint for whom the association is named. The place of meeting rotates among the homes of the members, and the soul-father of the host is always present to bless the occasion. The meetings consist of much eating, drinking, and conviviality. Membership in a *māhebar* is purely voluntary, and the individual who wishes to join one usually has a choice among several in a given area.*

For the Amhara laity, then, a few burdensome ritual and fiscal constraints

[735] * There is a variant of the *māhebar* known as the *zenbaī*, whose members take turns in providing food for the clergy and poor folk on Sundays.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

are balanced by a fairly permissive mode of organization. For the clergy, the constraints are heavier; the fasting requirements are increased, and the priesthood involves, as we have seen, strict marital fidelity. On the other hand, the individualistic organization of the clergy is most striking.

This individualism is conspicuous already in the church schools, which are organized not on a class basis but in a series of master-pupil relations. Students begin their courses of study whenever they arrive at the residence of the master, and proceed each at his own pace. The master spends the bulk of his time with more advanced students, who in turn are used to instruct the less advanced. The pupils are very much on their own, uncontrolled either by their families, with whom they no longer reside, nor by any formal institution. The same is true of the masters, who are not subjected to any sort of outside controls. Indeed, each teacher tends to develop his own unique method of teaching, regarding it as something of a personal monopoly.[24]

The ministrating clergy are likewise free from controls emanating from a broad ecclesiastical organization. Each parish church functions autonomously under the direction of a head (*alaqā*) chosen by the local clergy. (Heads of the most important churches have traditionally been appointed by the emperor.) The obligations of the priesthood are not very great. The chief duty of the priest is to take his turn in performing the Mass. His pastoral services are limited to occasional visits with his particular confessants, from whom he expects to receive regular rewards of food and drink. Otherwise, his life is much the same as that of his lay neighbors.

The role of the *dabtarā*, as we have seen, is still more flexible. *Dabtarā* who are associated with a parish church are expected to take their turns singing hymns and composing *qenē* in the outer ring of the church; but otherwise they exist as free entrepreneurs, and they need not be so attached unless they so desire.

The individualistic organization of the Ethiopian Church is most striking, perhaps, in the case of the monks, especially when compared with Christian monastic orders in the Western world. Ethiopian monks are bound by nothing other than the original conditions for assuming the role, namely, renouncing family ties and worldly possessions. The monk need not enter a monastery; he may continue to live in his old home or may take to the woods as a hermit. If he does go to live at a monastery, ~~his~~ life is not radically changed. The Ethiopian monastery is not an organized community, but a sacred place—the site of a large and important church, in the vicinity of which live numbers of individual monks. The monk comes and goes as he wishes, prays whenever he wants, and may live free of any obligations toward his fellow monastics and toward the rest of the society.*

* There are, however, some monasteries where a more organized and disciplined regime may be found.

*793 capital) and the parishes. The social identity of the
*793 parish tends to be defined in terms of the ties linking
• 794 its residents to the parish church. The church must be provided with sufficient clergy for the performance of the weekly Mass, as well as Masses on feast days and on occasions which mark a sacrament of the Church. This amounts to perhaps three Masses every week, each of which must be conducted by at least two priests (keys) and three deacons (diyakon). Ideally, these ecclesiastics are recruited from among the parish's risteñas, in return for the use of fields belonging to the parish church.
[796] The tie between residents of a parish and its eponymous church is further strengthened by the tendency of these people to confine their public ritual performances to the church, to favor the church's saint (reified in the arc, tabot) with private appeals for protection against illness and other misfortunes, to donate gifts to it when such appeals have been answered, to bury their dead in its churchyard, to pay towards the salary of a church teacher (astemariy) of the syllabary, and perhaps for a teacher (memher) of advanced Church subjects as well, and, lastly, to contribute in tithes (generally cereals and other foodstuffs) and labor towards the proper maintenance of the church.

443 Parish and Town. The highland zones can be conceptualized as a series of overlapping market spheres, each
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	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage III	4	
Ambilineage IV	3	
Ambilineage V		5
Ambilineage VI		3
Ambilineage VII		2
Total risteñas households	31	21

In each of the hamlets, there are two households belonging to Amhara tenant farmers (timeneña), individuals unable to claim membership in any local ambilineage. These tenants, who provide their own seed and draught animals, return a quarter of their crops to the risteñas whose fields they use. There in Tikurmidir two additional timeneña households, whose members are Muslims. These households are headed by brothers who supplement their agricultural activities by weaving the šama (toga) for local Christians.

Primary rights to a third of a parish's fields are believed to reside with the parish church. Ideally, the use of such fields, known as yikeys mariet ("priest's land"), is given to local priests in return for participating in the Masses of the parish church. In practice, rist-holding ambilineages become associated with specific tracts of yikeys mariet by providing such priests over generations. Occasionally, ambilineage

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Begemder

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members are unable to retain their claims to these church lands (which are intimately linked to the acquisition of leadership positions and prestige within the parish) by providing priests from their own ranks. Consequently, substitutes from outside the parish must be obtained. Such is the case with ambilineage I today. According to current allocation of yikeys mariet in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, ambilineages I and V are each expected to provide three priests for the Mass. Ambilineage V currently provides its three from three ambilineage households of Lemmariet. Ambilineage I, however, currently provides only one ristena priest (a resident of Tikurmidir). Thus, members of ambilineage I using these fields have been obliged to invite two non-ristena priests to take up residence on a portion of these lands, in return for participation in the Mass.

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Finally, these hamlets contain three female servants, unrelated to other residents of the parish. In Tikurmidir, there is a single Amhara attached to a household of ambilineage I; in Lemmariet there is a "bariya" in a household of ambilineage I, and another in a household of ambilineage V.

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Herbalist Medicine in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet. The herbalist therapies of these two hamlets are described in Table 7. With the use of this information, the following paragraphs will indicate that the professional

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621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen. [241] Until liberation, it was occupied by risteñas and cul- [423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the [198] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly, [795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields, [342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in [463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten [161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born 632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it- 621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from 592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households), and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Sankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen [241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house- [793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and [463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations which depend upon daily contact with [463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibañas, eight as wood cutters,